SERGEANT McCLINTOCK.

"OVER THERE"

The Thrill and the Hell of the Trenches, Described by an American Boy.

Sergeant Alexander McClintock of Lexington, Ky., and the Canadian Army Has Gripping Tale That Every American Will Read, For He Tells the Facts—Unadorned. Wounded, a Distinguished Conduct Medal Man, He Was Invalided Home, but Is Going "Out There" Again to Fight For Uncle Sam and His Allies. An Inspiring, Interesting, Personal Narrative, Full of the Spirit and Atmosphere of the Trenches.

No. 6. Decorated For Bravery; Home and Uncle Sam.

By Sergeant Alexander McClintock, D. C. M., 87th Overseas Batt., Canadian Gren. Guards.

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This is the concluding article of the series of six by Sergeant McClintock, an American boy of Lexington, Ky., who has seen service in France, was decorated for bravery and invalided home. He has been promised a commission in our army. The first five installments told of the fighting in Belgium and on the Somme, where he was desperately wounded. This final installment describes his journey to the rear with twenty-two pieces of shrapnel in one leg and his meeting with the king in a London hospital.

I WAS taken from Pozieres to Albert in a Ford ambulance or, as the Tommies would say, a "tin Lizzie." The man who drove this vehicle would make a good chauffeur for an adding machine. Apparently he was counting the bumps in the road, for he didn't miss one of them. However, the trip was only a matter of seven miles, and I was in fair condition when they lifted me out and carried me to an operating table in the field dressing station.

A chaplain came along and murmured a little prayer in my ear. I imagine that would have made a man feel very solemn if he had thought there was a chance he was about to pass out, but I knew I merely had a leg pretty badly smashed up, and while the chaplain was praying I was wondering if they would have to cut it off. I figured, if so, this would handicap my dancing.

The first formality in a shrapnel case is the administration of an anti-tetanus innoculation, and when it is done you realize that they are sure trying to save your life. The doctor uses a horse syringe, and the injection leaves a lump on your chest as big as a baseball, which stays with you for forty-eight hours. After the injection a nurse fills out a diagnosis blank with a description of your wounds and a record of your name, age, regiment, regimental number, religion, parentage and previous history as far as she can discover it without asking questions which would be positively indelicate. After all of that my wounds were given their first real dressing.

Immediately after this was done I was bundled into another ambulance and driven to Contay, where the C. C. S. (casualty clearing station) and rail head were located. In the ambulance with me were three other soldiers, an artillery officer and two privates of infantry. We were all ticketed off as shrapnel cases and probable recoveries, which latter detail is remarkable, since the most slightly injured of the four had twelve wounds, and there were sixty odd shell fragments or shrapnel balls collectively imbedded in us. The nurse had told me that I had about twenty wounds. Afterward her count proved conservative. More accurate and later returns showed twenty-two bullets and shell fragments were in my leg. They took these out and presented them to me. I have been giving them away for souvenirs.

We were fairly comfortable in the ambulance, and I especially had great relief from the fact that the nurse had strapped my leg in a sling attached to the top of the vehicle. We smoked cigarettes and chatted cheerfully, exchanging congratulations on having got "clean ones"—that is, wounds not probably fatal. The artillery officer told me he had been supporting our battalion that morning with one of the "sacrifice batteries."

A sacrifice battery, I might explain, is one composed of field pieces which are emplaced between the front and support lines and which in case of an attack or counterattack are fired at point blank range. They call them sacrifice batteries because some of them are wiped out every day. This officer said our battalion that morning had been supported by an entire division of artillery and that on our front of 400 yards the eighteen pounders alone, in a curtain fire which lasted thirty-two minutes, had discharged 15,000 rounds of high explosive shells.

I was impressed by his statement, of course, but I told him that, while this was an astonishing lot of ammunition, it was even more surprising to have noticed at close range, as I did, the number of Germans they missed. Toward the end of our trip to Contay we were much exhausted and pretty badly shaken up. We were beginning also to realize we were by no means out of the woods surgically. Our wounds had merely been dressed. Each of us faced an extensive and serious operation. We arrived at Contay silent and pretty badly depressed. For twenty-four hours in the Contay casualty clearing station they did little except feed us and take our temperatures hourly. Then we were put into a hospital train for Rouen.

Germans Bomb Hospital Train.

Right here I would like to tell a little story about a hospital train leaving Contay for Rouen—not the one we were on, but one which had left a few days before. The train, when it was just ready to depart with a full quota of wounded men, was attacked by German aeroplanes from which bombs were dropped upon it. There is nothing apparently that makes the Germans so fearless and ferocious as the Red Cross emblem. On the top of each of the cars in this train there was a Red Cross big enough to be seen from miles in the air. The German aviators accepted them merely as excellent targets. Their bombs quickly knocked three or four cars from the rails and killed several of the helplessly wounded men. The rest of the patients, weak and nervous from recent shock and injury, some of them half delirious and nearly all of them absolutely helpless and in pain, were thrown into near panic.

Two of the Nursing Sisters Were the Coolest Individuals Present.

Two of the nursing sisters in charge of the train were the coolest individuals present. They walked calmly up and down its length, urging the patients to remain quiet, directing the male attendants how to remove the wounded men safely from the wrecked cars and paying no attention whatever to the bombs which were still exploding near the train. I did not have the privilege of witnessing this scene myself, but I know that I have accurately described it, for the details were told in an official report when the king decorated the two sisters with the Royal Red Cross for valor in the face of the enemy.

The trip from Contay to Rouen was a nightmare—twenty-six hours traveling 150 miles on a train which was forever stopping and starting, its jerky and uncertain progress meaning to us just hours and hours of suffering. I do not know whether this part of the system for the removal of wounded has been improved now. Then, its inconveniences and imperfections must have been inevitable, for in every way afterward the most thoughtful and tender care was shown us. In the long rows of huts which compose the British general hospital at Rouen we found ourselves in what seemed like paradise.

In the hut which constituted the special ward for leg wounds I was lifted from the stretcher on which I had traveled all the way from Poizers into a comfortable bed with fresh, clean sheets, and instantly I found myself surrounded with quiet, trained, efficient care. I forgot the pain of my wounds and the dread of the coming operation when a tray of delicious food was placed beside my bed and a nurse prepared me for the enjoyment of it by bathing my face and hands with scented water.

On the following morning my leg was X rayed and photographed. I told the surgeon I thought the business of operating could very well be put off until I had had about three more square meals, but he couldn't see it that way. In the afternoon I got my first sickening dose of ether, and they took the first lot of iron out of me. I suppose these were just the surface deposits, for they only got five or six pieces. However, they continued systematically. I had five more operations, and every time I came out of the ether the row of bullets and shell scraps at the foot of my bed was a little longer. After the number had reached twenty-two they told me that perhaps there were a few more in there, but they thought they'd better let them stay.

My wounds had become septic, and it was necessary to give all attention to drainage and cure. It was about this time that everything for awhile seemed to become hazy and my memories got all queerly mixed up and confused. I recollect I conceived a violent dislike for a black dog that appeared from nowhere now and then and began chewing at my leg, and I believe I gave the nurse a severe talking to because she insisted on going to look on at the ball game when she ought to be sitting by to chase that dog away. And I was perfectly certain about her being at the ball game, because I saw her there when I was playing third base.

The Alarming Cablegram.

It was at this time (on Nov. 28, 1916, ten days after I had been wounded) that my father in Lexington received the following cablegram from the officer in charge of the Canadian records in England:

Sincerely regret to inform you that Sergeant Alexander McClintock is officially reported dangerously ill in No. 5 general hospital from gunshot wound in left thigh. Further particulars supplied when received.

It appears that during the time of my adventures with the black dog and the inattentive nurse my temperature had ascended to the stage when the doctors began to admit another method of treatment might have been successful. But I didn't pass out. The one thing I most regret about my close call is that my parents in Lexington were in unrelieved suspense about my condition until I myself sent them a cable from London on Dec. 15. After the first official message, seemingly prepared almost as a preface to the announcement of my demise, my father received no news of me whatever. And, as I didn't know that the official message had gone, I cabled nothing to him until I was feeling fairly chipper again. You can't have wars, though, without these little misunderstandings.

If it were possible I should say something here which would be fitting and adequate about the Englishwomen who nursed the 2,500 wounded men in general hospital No. 5 at Rouen, but that power isn't given me. All I can do is to fall back upon our most profound American expression of respect and say that my hat is off to them. One nurse in the ward in which I lay had been on her feet for fifty-six hours, with hardly time even to eat. She finally fainted from exhaustion, was carried out of the ward and was back again in four hours, assisting at an operation. And the doctors were doing their bit, too, in living up to the obligations which they considered to be theirs. An operating room was in every ward, with five tables in each. After the fight on the Somme, in which I was wounded, not a table was vacant any hour in the twenty-four for days at a time. Outside of each room was a long line of stretchers containing patients next awaiting surgical attention. And in all that stress I did not hear one word of complaint from the surgeons who stood hour after hour, using their skill and training for the petty pay of English army medical officers.

On Dec. 5 I was told I was well enough to be sent to England, and on the next day I went on a hospital train from Rouen to Havre. Here I was placed on a hospital ship which every medical officer in our army ought to have a chance to inspect. Nothing ingenuity could contrive for convenience and comfort was missing. Patients were sent below decks in elevators and then placed in swinging cradles which hung level no matter what the ship's motion might be. As soon as I had been made comfortable in my particular cradle I was given a box

People Stand In Crowds, the Men With Hats Off, While Ambulances Pass.

which had engraved upon it: "Presented with the compliments of the Union Castle line. May you have a speedy and good recovery." The box contained cigarettes, tobacco and a pipe.

When the ship docked at Southampton, after a run of eight hours across channel, each patient was asked what part of the British isles he would like to be taken to for the period of his convalescence. I requested to be taken to London, where, I thought, there was the best chance of my seeing Americans who might know me. Say, I sure made a good guess! I didn't know many Americans, but I didn't need to know them. They found me and made themselves acquainted. They brought things, and then they went out to get more they had forgotten to bring the first trip. The second day, after I had been installed on a cot in the King George hospital, in London, I sent 1,500 cigarettes back to the boys of our battalion in France out of my surplus stock. If I had undertaken to eat and drink and smoke all the things that were brought to me by Americans just because I was an American I'd be back in that hospital now only getting fairly started on the job. It's some country when you need it.

Wounded Get Great Welcome.

The wounded soldier getting back to England doesn't have a chance to imagine that his services are not appreciated. The welcome he receives begins at the railroad station. All traffic is stopped by the bobbies to give the ambulances a clear way leaving the station. The people stand in crowds, the men with their hats off, while the ambulances pass. Women rush out and throw flowers to the wounded men. Sometimes there is a cheer, but usually only silence and words of sympathy.

The King George hospital was built to be a government printing office and was nearing completion when the war broke cut. It has been made a paradise for convalescent men. The bareness and the sick suggestion and characteristic smell, so to speak, of the

"I thank you," he said, "for myself and my people for your services."

average hospital are unknown here. There are soft lights and comfortable beds and pretty women going about as visitors. The stage beauties and comedians come to entertain us. The food is delicious, and the chief thought of every one seems to be to show the inmates what a comfortable and cheery thing it is to be ill among a lot of real friends. I was there from December until February, and my recollections of the stay are so pleasant that sometimes I wish I was back.

On the Friday before Christmas there was a concert in our ward. Among the artists who entertained us were Fay Compton, Gertrude Elliott (sister of Maxine Elliott), George Robie and other stars of the London stage. After our protracted stay in the trenches and our long absence from all the civilized forms of amusement the affair seemed to us the most wonderful show ever given. And in some ways it was. For instance, in the most entertaining of dramatic exhibitions did you ever see the lady artists go around and reward enthusiastic applause with kisses? Well, that's what we got. And I am proud to say that it was Miss Compton who conferred this honor upon me.

At about 3 o'clock on that afternoon, when we were all having a good time, one of the orderlies threw open the door of the ward and announced in a loud voice that his majesty the king was coming in. We could not have been more surprised if some one had thrown in a Mills bomb. Almost immediately the king walked in, accompanied by a number of aids. They were all in service uniforms, the king having little in the style of his uniform to distinguish him from the others. He walked around, presenting each patient with a copy of "Queen Mary's Gift Book," an artistic little volume, with pictures and short stories by the most famous of English artists and writers. When he neared my bed he turned to one of the nurses and inquired:

"Is this the one?"

The nurse nodded. He came and sat at the side of the bed and shook hands with me. He asked as to what part of the United States I had come from, how I had got my wounds and what the nature of them were, how I was getting along and what I particularly wished done for me. I answered his questions and said that everything I could possibly wish for had already been done for me.

Thanked by King and Decorated For Bravery.

"I thank you," he said, "for myself and my people for your services. Our gratitude cannot be great enough toward men who have served as you have."

He spoke in a very low voice and with no assumption of royal dignity. There was nothing in the least thrilling about the incident, but there was much apparent sincerity in the few words.

After he had gone one of the nurses asked me what he had said.

"Oh," I said, "George asked me what I thought about the way the war was being conducted, and I said I'd drop in and talk it over with him as soon as I was well enough to be up."

There happened one of the great disappointments of my life. She didn't see the joke. She was English. She gasped and glared at me, and I think she went out and reported that I was delirious again.

Really, I wasn't much impressed by the English king. He seemed a pleasant, tired little man with a great burden to bear and not much of an idea about how to bear it. He struck me as an individual who would conscientiously do his best in any situation, but would never do or say anything with the slightest suspicion of a punch to it. A few days after his visit to the hospital I saw in the Official London Gazette that I had been awarded the distinguished conduct medal. Official letters from the Canadian headquarters amplified this information, and a notice from the British war office informed me that the medal awaited me there. I was told the king knew that the medal had been awarded to me when he spoke to me in the hospital. Despite glowing reports in the Kentucky press he didn't pin it on me. Probably he didn't have it with him, or perhaps he didn't consider it good form to hang a D. C. M. on a suit of striped presentation pajamas with a prevailing tone of baby blue.

While I was in the King George hospital I witnessed one of the most wonderful examples of courage and pluck I have ever seen. A young Scot only nineteen years old, McAuley by name, had had the greater part of his face blown away. The surgeons had patched him up in some fashion, but he was horribly disfigured. He was the brightest, merriest man in the ward, always joking and never depressed. His own terrible misfortune was merely the topic for humorous comment with him. He seemed to get positive amusement out of the fact that the surgeons were always sending for him to do something more with his face. One day he was going into the operating room and a fellow patient asked him what the new operation was to be.

"Oh," he said, "I'm going to have a cabbage put on in place of a head. It'll grow better than the one I have now."

Once in a fortnight he would manage to get leave to absent himself from the hospital for an hour or two. He never came back alone. It took a couple of men to bring him in. On the next morning he would say:

"Well, it was my birthday. A man must have a few drinks on his birthday."

I was discharged from the hospital in the middle of February and sent to a comfortable place at Hastings, Sussex, where I lived until my furlough papers came through. I had a fine time in London at the theaters and clubs pending my departure for home. When my furlough had arrived I went to Buxton, Derbyshire, where the Canadian discharge depot was located, and was provided with transportation to Montreal. I came back to America on the Canadian Pacific Royal Mail steamer Metagama, and the trip was without incident of any sort. We lay for a time in the Mersey, awaiting word that our convoy was ready to see us out of the danger zone, and a destroyer escorted us 400 miles on our way.

I was informed before my departure that a commission as lieutenant in the Canadian forces awaited my return from furlough, and I had every intention of going back to accept it, but since I got to America things have happened. Now it's the army of Uncle Sam for mine. I've written these stories to show what we are up against. It's going to be a tough game and a bloody one and a sorrowful one for many, but it's up to us to save the issue where it's mostly right on one side and all wrong on the other—and I'm glad we're in. I'm not willing to quit soldiering now, but I will be when we get through with this. Because when we finish up with all this there won't be any necessity for soldiering. The world will be free of war for a long, long time, and a God's mercy that.

THE END.

The State of Westsylvania.

The "province and government of Westsylvania" was a proposal made by the settlers in the southwest of Pennsylvania and the adjacent territory for the creation of a new state. It originated in connection with the troubles between Virginia and Pennsylvania, and the scheme was brought forward early in July, 1776. A description of the proposed government defines the bounds as "beginning at the eastern branch of the Ohio opposite the mouth of the Scioto and running thence in a direct line to the Owasioto pass, thence to the top of the Allegheny mountains, thence with the top of the said mountains to the northern limits of the purchase made from the Indians in 1768 at the treaty of Fort Stanwix, thence with the said limits to the Allegheny or Ohio river and then down the said river as purchased from the said Indians at the aforesaid treaty of Fort Stanwix at the beginning." A call for a convention to organize the government was issued, but a memorial of the Virginia committee of West Augusta county to the lower house of assembly led to the abandonment of the plan.—Philadelphia Press.

London's Crystal Palace.

Crystal palace was originally built in Hyde park for the great exhibition of 1851, being afterward removed to its present site and re-erected. At the first state opening of the palace by Queen Victoria it was urged that the usual artillery salute should not be fired, the reason given being that the concussion would shiver the glass roof and the company assembled below, including her majesty, would be cut into mincemeat. Dire were the predictions of the scaremongers when the design for the palace was made public. The first gale, they said, would inevitably wreck it, while the heat engendered by the sun pouring its rays upon the domed glass roof would be so terrific that no human being could withstand it. Consequently if they escaped an avalanche of glass they would be roasted to death inside the case.

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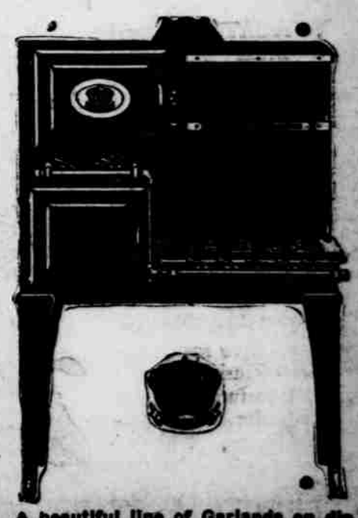

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